

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims as follows.

1-16. canceled

17. (new) A method of deoxidizing a metal salt in which a metallic calcium is dissolved, comprising:

purifying a dissolved metal salt by causing impurities in the metal to be absorbed onto a first material comprising titanium, a titanium alloy, zirconium and a zirconium alloy so as to produce a purified metal salt, wherein a relationship between a volume  $V$  ( $\text{cm}^3$ ) of the metal salt and a total surface area of said first material  $S$  ( $\text{cm}^2$ ) is controlled so that an equation (1) below,

$$V/S \leq 100 \quad (1)$$

is satisfied to improve purification efficiency; and

deoxidizing a second material comprising a titanium material by immersing the second material into the purified metal salt.

18. (new) The method of deoxidizing a metal salt according to claim 17, wherein the relationship between the volume  $V$  ( $\text{cm}^3$ ) of the metal salt and the total surface area  $S$  ( $\text{cm}^2$ ) of the first material is controlled so that an equation (2) below,

$$V/S \leq 10 \quad (2)$$

is satisfied to improve purification efficiency.

19. (new) The method of deoxidizing a metal salt according to claim 17, wherein foil-like titanium is used as the first material.